

Message Text

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, PINS, KS
SUBJ: THE HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT: THE SEARCH FOR BROADER
ISSUES

REF: STATE 179423 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: DISSIDENTS ARE ACTIVELY SEARCHING FOR ISSUES BEYOND
BASIC DEMANDS FOR RESTORATION OF POLITICAL FREEDOMS IN ORDER
TO BROADEN APPEAL OF MOVEMENT. HOWEVER, MOVEMENT HAS FACED
DIFFICULTIES IN ACHIEVING CONSENSUS ON THESE ISSUES. NEW
EFFORTS ARE BEING MADE TO DEVELOP ISSUES IN MORE ORDERLY
FASHION. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT NEW PLANKS IN PLATFORM MAY
GIVE MOVEMENT A MORE PROGRESSIVE IMAGE THAN IN PAST, BUT
LINE CHURCHES WHICH STILL FORM ESSENTIAL MASS OF SUPPORT
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS TEND TO BE CONSERVATIVE AND WILL
ACT AS BRAKE ON INTRODUCTION OF RADICAL IDEOLOGICAL DEPARTURES.

1. DISSIDENT HAVE SOUGHT TO SUPPLEMENT THEIR BASIC DEMANDS
FOR RESTORATION OF POLITICAL FREEDOMS WITH OTHER ISSUES IN
AN ATTEMPT TO BROADEN THE APPEAL OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS
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MOVEMENT IN THE PAST, AND THEY CONTINUE SEARCHING
FOR APPROPRIATE PLANKS TO ADD TO THEIR PLATFORM. THE
QUESTION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE WAS AN EARLY ADDITION TO
THEIR ARSENAL. IN PART, MOST HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS
EASILY AGREED TO THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AS
A NATIONAL GOAL, AND THE ISSUE ALSO SERVED TO QUESTION
THE ROKG ASSERTION THAT WHILE THE GOVT WAS RESTRICTIVE

IT WAS MOVING KOREA TOWARD A BETTER FUTURE. HOWEVER, DEFINING THE SPECIFIC CONTENTS OF A PROGRAM TO ENSURE SOCIAL JUSTICE HAS BEEN DIFFICULT EVEN WHEN THE BULK OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT CONSISTED OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH COMMUNITY. THE CREATION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT COALITION IN EARLY 1978 INTENSIFIED THE PROBLEM OF FINDING IDEOLOGICAL CONSENSUS BEYOND DEMANDS FOR RESTORATION OF POLITICAL FREEDOM IN KOREA SINCE IT SOUGHT TO INTEGRATE ALL HUMAN RIGHTS INTEREST GROUPS SUCH AS NON-CHRISTIANS, INTELLECTUALS, WRITERS, JOURNALISTS ON AN EQUAL FOOTING, AND SINCE THESE GROUPS SOMETIME HAS MORE EXOTIC VIEWS OF KOREAN REALITY THAN MOST OF THE CHURCHMEN ENTERTAIN.

2. THERE ARE EXCEPTIONS IN THE CHURCH, OF COURSE. AN IMPORTANT ONE IS REV MUN IK-HWAN, FORMER MYONGDON DEFENDANT. REV MUN'S INFLUENCE DOES NOT STEM FROM ANY SPECIFIC CHURCH POSITION THAT HE HOLDS, BUT FROM HIS DYNAMISM, INTELLECTUAL CAPACITY, AND INTEGRITY. HE IS HIGHLY NATIONALISTIC BUT VERY MUCH UP TO THE MOMENT ON CURRENT INTERNATIONAL INTELLECTUAL MOVEMENTS AS WELL. HE LIVES MODESTLY (BOOKS SEEM TO BE HIS ONLY ITEM OF EGREGIOUS CONSUMPTION), AND HE BELIEVES KOREA NEEDS TO GROW SPIRITUALLY NOT MATERIALLY. HIS VIEWS ON SOCIAL JUSTICE ARE STRONG: FEWER POSSESSIONS WITH EQUALITY OF WEALTH ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN MORE POSSESSIONS IF INEQUALITY OF WEALTH FOLLOWS. FOREIGN
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INVESTMENT AND AN EXPORT-ORIENTED ECONOMY CLASH WITH HEW VIEW OF NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE...THEY SEEM TO HIM TO BE TOOLS OF NEO-COLONIALISM AND DEPENDENCE. HE SEES KOREA AS PART OF THE THIRD WORLD.

3. REV MUN'S VIEW MAY BE ATTRACTIVE TO SOME OF THE INTELLECTUALS IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT COALITION AND MAY STIR SOME HARTS ON CAMPUS, BUT THEY ARE NOT WIDELY SHARED IN THE LINE CHURCHES WHICH CONSTITUTE THE LARGEST AND MOST ESSENTIAL GROUP IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT. UPON HIS RELEASE FROM POLICE DECLARATION, REV MUN WAS RESPECTFULLY ASKED BY KNCC TO REFRAIN FROM PRESENTING HIS VIEWS ON SPECIFIC NATIONAL ISSUES AS THOSE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT. BECAUSE OF HIS MORAL STATURE, REV MUN WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE AN INFLUENCE ON THE DIRECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT. INDEED, THERE ARE RUMORS THAT FORMER PRESIDENT YUN PO-SUN HOPES TO GROOM REV MUN AS HIS SUCCESSOR AS THE GRAND OLD MAN OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS STRUGGLE. STILL, MUN WILL NOT BE ABLE TO GET TOO FAR AHEAD OF THE GENERALLY CONSERVATIVE VIEWS OF THE LINE CHURCHES.

4. FOR ITS PART THE KNCC, APPRECIATING THE VALUE OF
HAVING A COMPREHENSIVE SET OF ISSUES TO BRING TO THE
PUBLIC AND DIFFICULTIES OF OBTAINING INTERNAL
CONSENSUS ON SUCH A PLATFORM, HAS TAKEN STEPS TO
ESTABLISH THE MACHINERY TO MOVE TOWARD THIS OBJECTIVE
IN AN ORDERLY FASHION. IT HAS ESTABLISHED THE KOREAN
CHRISTIAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE UNDER THE DIRECTION OF
A YOUNG PASTOR, WHO HAS DONE CONSIDERABLE GRADUATE WORK
OVERSEAS, TO DO BASIC STUDIES OF KOREAN REALITY AND
SUGGEST PROGRAMS WHICH COULD CONTRIBUTE TOWARD THE
CREATION OF A MORE HUMANE AND DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY.
APPARENTLY, THE KNCC HOPES THAT THE EXPERIENCE AND
ORIENTATION OF THE YOUNG DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE
WILL INTRODUCE IDEAS BEYOND THE PAROCHIAL CONSERVATISM
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OF MOST CHURCH LEADERS. HOWEVER, BEFORE ENDORSEMENT,
ALL SUGGESTIONS WOULD BE REVIEWED BY KNCC OFFICIALS
AND DENOMINATION LEADERS WHERE OVERLY ADVANCED POSITIONS
WOULD BE MODERATED. THE KNCC SEES THIS AS A PROCESS
WHICH WILL REQUIRE TIME, BUT WHICH WILL PRODUCE
MEANINGFUL ISSUES WHICH WILL HAVE SUPPORT OF THE
PROTESTANT COMMUNITY RELATED TO THE KNCC.
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